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Reviews and End Matter

BOOK REVIEWS

Manik-Manik di Indonesia/Beads in Indonesia.

Sumarah Adhyatman and Redjeki Arifin. Penerbit Djambatan, Jakarta. Distributed by Indoarts, Inc., 3424 Sacramento Street, San Francisco, CA 94118. 1993. i-xvi + 164 pp., 63 b&w figs., 155 color figs. $48.00 (hard cover) + $4.25 postage in the U.S. ($58.00 + $5.25 abroad).

This very welcome work doesn't just "fill a gap" in the bead literature of the Insulindies—it *is* the bead literature of the Insulindies. Until the publication of *Beads in Indonesia*, the bead researcher had to comb a multitude of learned and art journals for information, thinly strewn. This book pulls most of the relevant information together for the bead amateur and provides the more serious researcher with a few pointers for further study.

The book starts with a sketchy overview of the world's ancient beadmaking centers and bead trade, especially with reference to Southeast Asia. It is when the authors reach Indonesia proper that they are on firmer ground. They appear to be especially familiar with Java and Sumatra—ancient, old and modern—though their main slant is archaeological throughout. Much of the available bead literature deals with these two large islands and their colorful past; *Beads in Indonesia* introduces the main types of old and contemporary beads with color illustrations of acceptable quality which are vital for comparative purposes.

Well-captioned, high-quality color illustrations are doubly necessary until the bead world manages to agree on a fixed terminology and comprehensive classification system for beads. "Jatim polychromes, mistakenly called 'Majapahit Beads' by antique dealers who were looking for a popular trade name..." is the authors' lament when describing a very distinctive bead of East Java (Jatim, i.e. "Java Timor")(p.63). Just about any researcher comes up against such local names, whether they were bestowed by dealers, collectors or the bead owners and users. "Pony bead" and "padre bead" don't mean much to an Indonesian collector, but neither do "Banter bead" or "Manang bead" to a French one. Descriptive names like "bird bead" or "polychrome eye bead" are self-explanatory and useful if supported by good illustrations. For that matter, "mutisalah" is by no means a universal term for the peppercorn-sized bead of opaque Indian-red glass! Some Insulindian peoples who value this drawn or coiled bead highly call it by completely different names.

Various ethnic groups name their own beads, but such terminology should only be used very sparingly in pure bead research. It belongs properly to the province of the ethnographer and *Beads in Indonesia* is not intended to be an ethnographical study. That, considering the variety of peoples in Southeast Asia's largest nation, would fill a book ten times the size of the present volume!

The volume is well written and easy to read, but in some parts it tantalizes rather than informs. A casual statement like "in Kalimantan 16th century Chinese monochrome beads were changed into eye beads..." (p.7) begs the traditional journalist's questions: when, where, how and who? A statement like "...considering that the practice of burial in megalithic stone graves can continue into the classical period, and based on the latest data concerning Indo-Pacific beads, it might be necessary to review this dating..." (p.38; reference to East Java) is much easier to take than unsubstantiated assertions casually tossed about!

The last chapter, "Modern Beads," is very informative; it demonstrates the authors' hands-on involvement with current bead affairs. Modern Egyptian and African beads are indeed turning up in the Insulindian markets; "new-beads-as-old" are sold, bartered, substituted, renovated and ground;

well-known antiques are reproduced, faked... you name it! The burgeoning Indonesian bead manufactories draw on a pool of economical skilled labor. If they can satisfy the buyers' demand for pretty beads and leave the antiques where they belong—in Indonesian hands—long may they flourish!

The bibliography at the end of *Beads in Indonesia* is fairly sketchy. Its most useful aspect is the inclusion of a number of works by younger Indonesian researchers which may not yet be well known overseas. This being the case, further information on how and where to obtain copies of their studies would have been valuable.

Beads in Indonesia is a well-produced and attractively bound book, one in a series of Penerbit Djambatan's Indonesian Cultural Heritage dual-language texts. This policy ought to increase the size of print runs and thus reduce cost, but that doesn't seem to be the case. In the Singapore market at any rate, compared to similar-sized tomes, it is considered very expensive. This is a pity; the Insulindians are exactly the people who should read it!

In the introductory pages of the book is a caveat that speaks straight to the heart of many readers, especially those who live in areas trying to preserve an endangered heritage. The authors initially hesitated to publish this work because:

> ...books on antiques will stimulate the demand for the objects concerned and will increase their prices. Archaeologists thus fear the damaging of more historical sites by illegal digging. But the insatiable demand by international collectors and art dealers for Indonesian antiques will continue, and as the reality has shown, the existing preventing measures are inadequate..." (p. xiii).

Is it too much to hope that every serious student and admirer of these fascinating artifacts will take these words to heart and buy this book, not a bead?

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Catalogue of the Beck Collection of Beads in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology: Part 1, Europe.

> **The Bead Study Trust.** Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DZ, England, U.K. 1997. 160 pp., 117 b&w figs., 2 color fiches. £9.95 ($19.70US) postpaid (soft cover).

The Bead Study Trust (BST), England's premiere organization of bead researchers, has produced the first in a series of publications that fulfil its mission since 1980: to publish the Beck Collection. Four volumes are anticipated, and will cover different regional aspects of the collection acquired by Horace C. Beck in his lifetime, and now housed at the University Museum at Cambridge. The BST is a small but dedicated group of scholars and enthusiasts, whose members have particular areas of interest. The first volume pertains to beads from Europe, and spans such areas, in sequence, as: England, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, France, Switzerland, Italy, Corsica, Sardinia, Spain, Tunisia, Malta, Crete, Cyprus, Rhodes, The Eastern Mediterranean, Greece, Russia, and Hungary—all areas from which specimens in the collection are derived.

The catalogue is organized such that original assemblages, as acquired and kept by Beck, are presented. This is a logical and simple approach to presentation, but is not always useful—depending on what one may wish to study—for a diverse collection that contains materials such as stone, metal, natural materials (teeth, bone, shell, ivory, amber and other fossils), faience, and a broad variety of glass beads which may range anywhere from ca. 30,000 B.C. through medieval times.

Beck made concerted efforts to get researchers (mainly archaeologists) to describe beads in a comprehensive manner that would be meaningful, and which would allow assemblages to be compared one to another. He is primarily remembered for composing his classification of beads and pendants, published in 1928, and used with greater and lesser success by those who have followed him. In this new catalogue, it is greatly ironic that Beck's advice was not incorporated into bead descriptions. Although Beck did not classify glass beads by their specific technologies (as he was often unfamiliar with or undecided about much of this,

as were most archaeologists of the day), he implied the usefulness of this approach in his writings. Certainly, since those times, with the increase of understanding of glass technology and of its importance and usefulness, most modern researchers attempt to arrange and classify glass beads in this manner. The Beck catalogue suffers from a presentation that largely ignores this aspect, and thus has quite limited usefulness. The descriptions of the beads include size, shape, color and decoration. However, these are themselves clumsy or misleading, and are in an obtuse form; e.g., "orange opaque" where "opaque orange" would make more sense (elsewhere descriptions say "dark blue" and not "blue dark," which is sensible). Shape names are sometimes incorrect; e.g., "gadrooned" where "melon-form," or "globular" where "spherical" would be more accurate. Bead descriptions are augmented by occasional black-and-white drawings. In several instances, the drawing is paired with the wrong description—which is an unfortunate error. Thus, we can read of beads that are described as "cylindrical," when the shape pictured is clearly a sub-oblate (p. 31); or a "rock crystal" bead that is depicted as a dark glass bead with light-colored trail decoration of zigzag lines (p. 47). Adequate proofreading would have caught these errors before the book went to press. One hopes that subsequent volumes will have more complete and accurate descriptions and illustrations.

The catalogue begins with some 21 pages of introductory material. Submissions include a brief preface by George Boon, concerning the BST and its founding; a biographical essay on Beck's career by Flora Westlake (his daughter, and founder of the BST); an essay by Peter Francis, Jr., expressing the importance of Beck's pioneering efforts; a list of Beck's publications (thought to be complete, or nearly so); and an introduction by Julian Henderson, with Helen Hughes-Brock covering the scope of the collection. These papers are interesting and informative, particularly for any bead enthusiast or researcher who understands the nature of Beck's place in history—or who may want to know such information. These materials may be the true contribution to bead research contained in this book.

The BST felt that printing illustrations in color would have been prohibitively expensive, and opted for the solution of including two pages of color micro fiche. Although some readers may be put off by the need of using a micro-fiche reader (a somewhat outdated and inconvenient apparatus), it is not as bad as may be supposed. One may attend the local library to use a fiche reader, though it is also possible to get a good look at the images using only a hand-held slide viewer. The photographs are excellent and beautiful, and greatly enhance the usefulness of the book.

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The Ghanaian Bead Tradition: Materials, Traditional Techniques, Archaeological and Historical Chronology, Bead Usage, Traditional-Sociological Meaning.

Kumekpor, M.L., Y. Bredwa-Mensah and J.E.J.M. van Landewijk. Ghana Bead Society, Box C788, Cantonments, Accra, Ghana. *Special Paper* 1. 1995. i-viii + 44 pp., 8 b&w figs. Price unknown (paper).

The Ghana Bead Society, which was established in 1993, is the first bead society in Africa, and it seems fitting that this should happen in a country where there is such a rich bead tradition. Its membership includes both Ghanaians and expatriates, and the program includes building a permanent bead collection and reference library, encouraging local bead production and making contacts within the wider field of bead studies. The credibility of the society was evident when the first edition of this booklet came out.

The second edition, which is already out of print, contains five chapters. The first, "Introduction to Bead Materials," covers techniques and materials—including natural materials, stone and, of course, glass. Techniques covered include drilling and polishing, and there is an informative section on identification, imitation and alteration. Chapter two covers annotated archaeological and historical chronology, while the third deals with socio-traditional usage and the meaning of beads. Chapter four covers "New and Post-Modern Trends," while the last chapter winds up with an account of the Ghana Bead Society. There is a map of Ghana, a reference bibliography, some line drawings, and the cover has five color illustrations.

Moving to a more detailed analysis, the words "palm kernel hull" are used on pp. 1, 2 and 8 in a context that suggests that coconut shell is intended. In describing the making of wound glass beads, a small gather of molten glass is wound round a wire—not quite the same as the description on p. 4, paragraph 2; and a marver (not a maver) is used to shape the wound bead. Venice, rather than Venetia, is the source of imported glass beads. The description of powder-glass beadmaking on pp. 5-6 is good, although the vexed question of the antique Bodom beads is avoided. Sometimes reference citations omit the relevant page; sometimes (as in the case of the Keta beads [pp. 5-6, 8-9]) the discussion is incomplete, and one has to infer that genuine *mamadzonu* and imitation *yevudzonu* refer to Keta beads (Keta is not on the map) and that the process is almost certainly that assigned to Goaso and described by G. E. Sinclair in 1939, and by Peter Francis, Jr. (1993b).

Chapter two, an annotated archaeological and historical chronology is, in my view, the best and most authoritative part of the book, containing details of various types of beads in archaeological contexts and many excavation sites including the little-known glass-working site at Begho. There is a tantalizing gap in the lack of a reference to the relevant excavation report that describes the evidence for glass beadmaking there, unless the reference entry to M. Posnansky, 1970, is the one.

The third chapter is essential reading for those interested in the part that beads play in traditional Ghanaian life, whether worn by type, by gender or by position in society. In a religious context, certain beads are prescribed, whether as priestly wear or as offerings. When a chief is "outdoored" (this appears to mean the process of public investiture but is not a word in general use; p. 18), certain beads are essential as part of the validating process, and the practice is described. On a more mundane level, women need to wear waist beads as an essential part of their costume. When a baby or a young woman is "outdoored" (that word again; pp. 19, 20) there is a rite of passage involved, and there certain types of beads have to be used in a prescribed way. Marriage, pregnancy and death also call for the use of specific beads. The material of which beads are made is also important, and the significance of some examples is given; the way in which beads are strung and worn can be significant as well.

Chapter four discusses the revived interest in beads in the modern context of preserving tradition vis-à-vis the burgeoning bead trade, the need for accurate information and validation, and control and checks on the export (and possible plundering) of old, rare and valuable beads. The preceding pages have made it clear just how important this sort of knowledge is and so the Ghana Bead Society is to be warmly congratulated for its initiative in sponsoring the recording of traditional beliefs, usage and attitudes relating to beads, as well as encouraging archaeological research and publication. Over and above all this, the Society supports the appreciation of beads within contemporary life, as by holding a fashion show entitled "Ghanaian Beads—A Fashion Statement" as its annual fund raiser event in 1996.

Reviews are intended to tell the reader what the publication is about and whether it is worth buying or reading—which this is. They should also point out where improvements can be made. The Ghana Bead Society has already supplied a page of corrigenda that appears at the outset (although there are many more not listed). This page includes three extra references, but it is surprising not to find among those the booklet by Peter Francis, Jr. (1993a). In fact, the reference lists in both booklets include items not found in the other, though the work under review has a greater number deriving from Ghanaian publications. Some spellings need correction (e.g., "tektites" for "tectites; p. 5), and an eagle-eyed proofreader would have been beneficial. Having said all that, this is a booklet well worth having, and we look forward to a revised third edition before too long, as well as further publications from The Ghana Bead Society.

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Les Perles: Au fil du textile.

Natacha Wolters. Dans le droit fil. Syros, 9 bis, rue Abel-Hovelacque, 75013 Paris, France. 1996. 152 pp., 158 color figs., 4 b&w figs., bibliography. 250 French Francs (paper cover).

In the introduction, Claude Fauque dedicates Natacha Wolters' book *Les Perles: au fil du textile* to the "dialogue between beads and thread." Superbly illustrated, the book describes not only techniques from the past, but also contemporary methods, principally from Europe. Throughout, the author provides unique insights pertinent to the history of beadwork.

The first of five chapters covers the renewal of interest in beads during the 1960s, and the further development of this interest in the U.S. in the 1970s. A history of beads follows, they being describing as rich in symbolism throughout the world since prehistoric times. Magical beads have entered into the composition of numerous talismans, adorning fetishes and decorating the accessories of magicians and sorcerers. Today, in Europe, simple beaded and sequined textiles made in China and India at bargain prices can be found everywhere in ready-to-wear shops. In contrast, wonderfully intricate creations by the high fashion industry show a grand extravagance in the use of materials and the mastering of beading techniques.

The translated title of Chapter 2 is "Man and Beads, or how man invented glass beads, made them last through the centuries, associated them with their rituals, wore them in town as well as in the country." The photograph of coral-colored bead samples from the Salvadori glassworks (France) is particularly interesting. Among other things, Salvadori is known for its reproduction of old colors from the past. However, Wolters' statement that Salvadori is the only current producer of glass beads in France (p. 32) is somewhat misleading. Actually, Salvadori is the only maker of *seed* beads left in France, whereas there do exist several glass beadmakers, most of them producing for the high fashion industry (Opper and Opper 1991).

Following an explanation of how millefiori beads are made is a passage (p. 38) that mentions several names given to specific beads. Given the wide range of such names and their descriptions in the existing bead literature, more attention to already-published research would have strengthened this section considerably.

In her description of wax-filled blown glass beads, the author describes them as being made in only two colors: goldtone, made with yellow pigment, and coppertone, made with cinnabar. Other wax-filled blown beads were additionally decorated by applying *essence d'orient,* a nacreous coating, to the inside surface of the beads, as mentioned in another section by Wolters (p. 41). It should be noted that several other colors also existed, made to imitate stones used in jewelry. Colors were sometimes combined to give a jasper-like effect.

Glass beadmaking is then covered, followed by how beads were used in religious rituals. Wolters next discusses 19th-century costumes and fashions in both urban and rural areas. Page 48 shows two typical examples of early 20th-century postcards. Respectively, they depict a girl and a grown woman from Brittany, both dressed in their traditional Sunday finest. These postcards are particularly interesting because they are adorned with actual samples of beads and sequins attached to the cards. Unfortunately, the author dates these rare examples to the 1920s, whereas the postcards are typical of those published after 1906, but before the beginning of the Second World War. In fact, the stamp cancellation on one of the postcards shows a mailing date of 1908.

Brittany is a region that has long conserved the practice of wearing traditional costumes. This tradition is of such cultural importance that the French government has led an official inquest since 1990, seeking out and documenting Breton women who continue to wear these decorated costumes.

Embroidery using beads is covered in the third chapter of the book. Numerous examples are shown

and discussed, such as beaded fabrics from ancient Egypt and Byzantium, embroidered religious articles used in 17th-century French churches, and icons. Also shown is a 19th-century English chair entirely covered with beaded embroidery. Different techniques of embroidered beadwork are described. Every fabric is the result of a different and sophisticated technique, and these different techniques, used at different times during the evolution of this art form, serve to identify the age of the fabric.

The astonishing method called *sable* appeared in France at the end of the 17th century, and seems to have been perfected in Paris. It called for using the smallest seed beads available; up to 155 of these tiny beads being used to cover only one square centimeter! The beads were attached using a method influenced by both basket-weaving and lace-making techniques, and resulted in a very supple material.

In the fourth chapter, Wolters shows various examples of beads that have been embroidered, strung, knitted, woven, and crocheted to create purses, mittens and other items. In the 19th century, colored glass beads from Berlin offered a vide range of colors, allowing beadworkers to make whatever they wished. The goal of finished pieces from this period was to imitate intricate paintings. Motifs were, for the most part, symbolic; some of the more popular themes were flowers and other plants. Romanticized rural scenes were also very popular, as were patriotic and domestic subjects. Contemporary objects, such as a Zulu necklace and a bracelet from Togo, are also included in this section.

Loosely translated, the fifth and final chapter is titled "Crazy About Beads." Here, Wolters concentrates on collectors and artists alike. Examples shown include French masterpieces from beadworking studios, work by the House of Lesage and the House of Vicaire, and objects from the collections of the Berlin Museum of Decorative Arts, as well as the Museum of Fashion and Textiles in Paris. Also depicted are works by individual contemporary artists and pieces from private collections.

Several lines written by noted French bead author M.-F. Delarozière end the chapter. Having written the marvelous book on Mauritanian beads, *Les Perles de Mauritanie,* she opened a whole new world of beads to European and American enthusiasts alike. It is regrettable, however, that Mme. Delarozière continues to describe chevron/star beads as possibly dating to the 1st century B.C., having been made in Alexandria. This is a very old story, one that has been debunked time and again by researcher/author Jamey D. Allen (1995).

All of the numerous color photographs in *Les Perles: au fil du textile* are of excellent quality and, for the most part, very informative. However, less emphasis should have been given to photos of loose beads whose connection with the subject of beadwork is questionable at best (pp. 30, 35, 43, 144-145). Additional photographs of work by the renowned embroiderer Lesage (who wrote the preface to the book), or by the author herself, might have been more appropriate.

Despite the small criticisms in this review, *Les Perles: au fil du textile* is very well written, and contains much well-researched information. It will make a significant addition to the library of most any beadworker, collector, artist or researcher.

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